



Working on the inside...
Succeeding on the outside

Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) Advisory Council Minutes

350 Conley Lake Rd. – Deer Lodge, MT 59722
December 11, 2008

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Senator Kim Gillan, Dr. David Yarlott, Gerald Bender, Brian Sheridan, and Mike Monforton

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (DOC) MEMBERS PRESENT: Gayle Lambert, MCE Administrator; Johnal Holst, Industries Director, Larry Burke, Vocational Education Director; Bill Dabney, Agriculture Director, Joe Mihelic, Food Factory Director and Gail Boese, MCE Administrative Officer

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Representative Mike Jopek, Cheryl Moore-Gough, and Peggy Grimes

GUESTS: Donci Bardash, Department of Corrections

The MCE Advisory Council met at the MCE Ranch Accounting office and the meeting was called to order by Senator Kim Gillan.

A motion to accept the revised minutes of the July 9, 2008 meeting was seconded and approved.

Donci Bardash

Donci Bardash, Federal Grants Coordinator for the Department of Corrections, addressed the advisory council to gather feedback regarding the white paper and the grant timeline (see attached) for a new 3-year grant application being developed for the US Department of Education's Youthful Offenders Grant. Recommendations will provide the basis for the agency's 2009 application.

Originally, the Youthful Offender Grant began in 2007, when Montana Correctional Enterprises, under Gayle Lambert's leadership, took the grant program under its wing. Continuing this grant will encourage incarcerated youths to acquire educational and job skills through work, education and readiness through the pursuit of post-secondary education certificates, Associate of arts degrees, and bachelor degrees through an accredited program. This will allow the inmates to secure stable employment in the community upon release, reduce recidivism, address the needs of Montana offenders, improve the community, protect public safety, and meet local labor demands.

Donci also discussed the project's vision. She felt that the vision statement for POWER "Project Offender Work and Education Ready" outlines what the organization should be, concentrates on the future, is a source of inspiration and provides clear decision-making criteria. The council unanimously agreed that the Vision statement was very appropriate.

Donci further discussed areas of study to be considered which should be limited to one or two fields. A report from the US Department of Education found that "inmates were more likely to participate in programs if they believed their participation could help them secure employment after release."

Legislative Issues

Gayle Lambert and Senator Kim Gillan discussed upcoming legislative issues, budget overview and long range building proposals. Items of interest were the license plate reissue, HB2 which included overtime/inmate pay and Canteen authority, produce farming and the biomass boiler.

Gayle Lambert

Montana Codes Annotated (MCA's)

Gayle discussed the changes to Montana Codes Annotated 53-30-131, 53-30-132 and 53-30-133 that deals with correctional enterprises. SB-84 deals with reorganizing the statutes for Montana Correctional Enterprises and a change in the way inmates' room and board charges are to be deposited providing a retroactive applicability date.

MCE Recidivism Study

Gayle discussed the Legislative Biennial Report and handouts of MCE's sections in the report were available to the council members. Gayle also discussed the recidivism study and the chart found on page F-4. The chart shows that inmates spending more time in MCE programs are less likely to return to prison than those who spend little or no time participating.

Cardboard Recycling Project

Joe Mihelic discussed the cardboard recycling project that began in October 2008. Montana Department of Corrections entered into a contract with Sure-way Systems, Inc. Sure-way is responsible for the delivery and pick-up of the cardboard recycling container approximately every two weeks.

MCE Security Enhancements

Additional security enhancements have been initiated by MCE which includes the hiring of two ranch security officers and the installation of a GPS monitoring system on all ranch vehicles.

Issuance of Montana Inmate Identification

Montana Department of Corrections entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Montana Department of Justice concerning MCE processing and issuing Montana identification cards to certain inmates of Montana correctional facilities. Montana is now one of two states in the country who is a licensed agent to process ID cards. Equipment has been ordered and will be able to be taken to correctional facilities around the state to process these identification cards. It is hoped that we will be able to process about 100 identification cards per month.

Director's Reports

Larry Burke – Vocational Education Director

Larry stated that two new teacher positions and a laundry supervisor position have been filled. He also stated that the Cannery has been processing wild game. Larry also thanked Brian Sheridan for the opportunity to visit his facility, Modern Machinery, in Missoula, Montana. It is his expectation that we may be able to partnership with Modern Machinery to help with some of our vocational training needs.

Joe Mihelic – Food Factory Director

Joe informed the council members that the food factory would be switching to tray meals at the Work Dorm. He also stated that two of his civilian staff and one Cannery staff member would be attending the Better Process Control School which would allow these individuals to be cross-trained in the Montana Food Bank and the Food Factory. Joe also mentioned that his department is looking at a proposal to work 4-10's.

Johnal Holst – Industries Director

Johnal stated that sales are down 15% but is confident that this will improve as one of our dealers is merging increasing sales personnel by 16. Johnal also stated that many of our federally certified programs are currently at a standstill due to the fact that some of the products are seasonal and also due to the state of the economy. He is still hopeful that Thomas Tooling, another federally certified program, will be able to begin production in the next couple of months.

Johnal stated that the owner of Bowman's Wilson Boots sold his business; therefore the boot factory program has been eliminated. The current space is being used for refurbishing sewing machines and a garment manufacturing program. This program will sew scrubs at the Montana State Prison facility and also at the private prison in Shelby, Montana.

Dave Miller – Dairy Manager

Dave stated that feed prices continue to be high. He also stated that surplus cows and heifers were sold for a good price. Dave also informed the council members that he

attended the National Association of Institutional Agribusiness Convention in Canon City, Colorado recently.

Bill Dabney – Agriculture Director

Bill informed the council members that all work at the Taylor Reservoir spillway is complete. Work will begin on the Kern dam in January. Bill also stated that the ranch and fire crew are busy cutting firewood for the Governor's project and also mentioned that calves were sold through a video auction.

Advisory Board Member Vacancies

Mike Jopek will remain as a council member and was not able to attend today due to the funeral for Representative George Groesbeck. Gayle is working with the Governor's office for a vacancy replacement left by Larry Mayo. The council agreed that it would be very beneficial to have that vacancy filled by someone from the Carpenters Union.

Advisory Council Recommendations

Brian Sheridan felt that we are doing a good job and would like us to continue to put emphasis on offering vocational education with certification to help inmates secure employment upon release. He is also willing to offer us support anyway he can with training, etc.

Dr. David Yarlott agreed and feels it is imperative for the council members to work through their communities to help support what we do here at the prison. He is especially concerned with the Native American population in his community. It is important for each of us to educate others about the good things that MCE is doing to prepare inmates to return to society.

Gayle felt it might be helpful to the council to have MCE put together a 5-10 year projection plan and bring it to the Council for review. The Council agreed and Gayle will work on this project.

The tour of the DOC Work and Reentry Center was postponed until the next meeting. There being no further business and no public comment, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Gail M. Boese

Gail Boese, Administrative Officer